REPORT

OF THE

Executive Committee

OF THE

New York Civil-Service Reform Association

READ AT THE ANNUAL MEETING, MAY 1, 1889.

WITH THE ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT

AND OTHER PAPERS.

NEW YORK:
PUBLISHED FOR THE
CIVIL-SERVICE REFORM ASSOCIATION
1889.

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ADDRESS TO THE ASSOCIATION

PREPARED BY

GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS, *President*

AND READ BY THE SECRETARY.

The interesting question at the annual meeting of this Association is the condition and prospect of Civil Service Reform under the party change of administration which occurred on the 4th of March. The question was not prominent in the canvass. The Democratic platform was reported in the Convention of the Democratic party by one of the strongest opponents of reform, as we understand it, and declared merely that the Democratic administration had enforced honest Civil-Service Reform. The Republican platform on the other hand contained the most comprehensive and careful declaration upon the Subject ever made in a national Convention and not only pledged the party unreservedly to the policy of reform but pledged it not to break its pledges. The debate of the campaign, however, turned upon the tariff, and reform in the Civil Service was mentioned only to accuse the late administration of its betrayal. After the campaign had opened, President Cleveland, in a special message transmitting to Congress the fourth annual report of the Civil Service Commission, congratulated the country upon "the firm, sensible and practical foundation upon which, this reform now rests." In his letter of acceptance General Harrison strongly and elaborately expressed his approval of reform and, as the party had pledged itself in the platform, he pledged himself in his letter, declaring "It will be, however, my sincere purpose, if elected, to advance the reform."

Two months have now passed, and it will be useful to see how far under the new auspices reform has advanced. It is our

duty in the interest of reform and without party predelictions to try performances by principles, and to test the fidelity of the administration to its voluntary pledges. This is to be done by us always, as it has always been done, not for the purpose of making a case for or against a party or an administration, but solely to ascertain the truth. The party of the present administration, raised the standard of reform as distinctly its policy, and as such the President accepted it. The party, therefore, and the friends of reform who sustained it at the polls, are justified in demanding from the Executive a course strictly in accord with the party pledges; and, in pursuing that course the President is equally justified in counting upon the support of his party in the persons of its recognized leaders and official committees, in the general sympathy and approval of its members, and in the uniform and steady encouragement of the party press. Our inquiry, therefore, is, simply, how fully during the first two months of the administration has the President illustrated what he declared to be his sincere purpose of advancing the reform and how strictly has the party held him to an honorable observance of its own voluntary pledge before the election.

The chief obstruction to wholesome reform in the civil service is the usurpation of the appointing power by members of Congress. This power was carefully and purposely withheld from them by the Constitution, except as it required the advice and consent of the Senate to confirm and complete certain appointments of the executive. President Hayes, in his first message, mentioned this usurpation, as the most serious obstacle to reform. President Garfield, when a representative in Congress, alleged that the pressure of Senators and Representatives for patronage obstructed the public business. Mr. Blaine in his review of Twenty Years in Congress, says: "no reform in the civil service will be valuable, that does not release members of Congress from the care and embarrassment of appointments." Bills have been introduced to prohibit Congressional interference with the execu-

tive power of appointment, and Senator Edmunds formerly warmly favored such prohibition. But Congress has never seriously considered the subject.

The successful party having proclaimed reform as its policy and Congressional usurpation being the first powerful obstacle that reform encounters, how have members of Congress enforced the party platform? One fact will serve as a reply and an illustration. The Congressional delegation of Vermont in both houses, after duly deliberating upon applications for appointment decided how long the present incumbents should retain their places and who should be appointed to succeed them, thus gravely putting into form a flagrantly unconstitutional abuse of the kind which justly aroused general indignation when the late Postmaster General Vilas practically invited members of Congress to inform him what post office changes they desired. The regard for the reform policy displayed by members of Congress of the administration party is further illustrated by statements made by one of the most devoted organs of that party. Among the applications to the President, was that of an ex-member of Congress to be appointed head of a bureau in which the opportunities of corrupt dealing are enormous, and his request was supported by a hundred members of the late House. Yet the man whose appointment they urged had escaped expulsion from the House for corrupt practices only because a two-thirds vote was required for that purpose and he was then censured by a unanimous vote. He was subsequently shown by an investigation of the House to have acquired a large fraudulent claim through the Treasury, for which the Treasury sent his case to the Criminal Court of the District of Columbia. Another person who had been removed from office by President Grant for improper and presumably personal use of public money, was supported by a state delegation in Congress for a seat in the President's Cabinet.

The strict observance of the spirit and purpose of reform by the party at large is illustrated by the occupation of Washington

by a host of party office seekers and their unceasing assault upon the President for places: and by the instance of a notorious Congressional lobbyist who was pressed for appointment to an important position in the Post Office Department by one of the most prominent and influential of the party clubs. These are not solitary cases; they are examples of the general manner in which members of Congress, and the various party associations and active members of the party prove the sincerity of the platform pledges, and the party resolution to reform the civil service.

What has been the course of the President towards this usurpation of Congress? According to the statement of four representatives from Missouri, the President requested them to serve as a committee on patronage and submit to him a list of persons for appointment to office, without any intimation that there were proper vacancies to be filled, but in obedience to the traditional assumption that with a change of administration there would be a general political change throughout the service. This is the executive commentary upon the declaration of the platform that "spirit and purpose of reform should be observed in all executive appointments," and upon his own declaration that "only the interest of the public service should suggest removals from office." In his inaugural address the President said that, as it was impossible for him to know many of the applicants for office, he must rely upon the information of others. This is undoubtedly necessary. But in every case of application he could ascertain whether there was a vacancy in the office sought or whether there was a reason connected with the honest and efficient conduct of the public service for making a vacancy by removal. Having satisfied himself upon these points he could then have avoided seeking advice of those whose recommendations would be governed by political and personal considerations and not by regard for the service itself. This is almost universally true of the advice of members of Congress, and in making them his chief and practically absolute advisers, the President

merely strengthens the main obstacle to reform. Unfortunately, those whether members of congress or not who are known to have been his advisers in many cases which would test his fidelity to the reform proclaimed by his party have been notorious enemies of reform. He said indeed in his inaugural address that "honorable party service will certainly not be esteemed by me a disqualification for public office." But this remark, fairly interpreted by the party platform, signified that differences of party opinion would not disqualify honest and efficient public officers for retaining their places and that they might be secure against removal. If this was not its purpose, if it was designed to imply that such officers would be replaced by political opponents, it was a mere proclamation of the spoils dogma, and as such a complete abandonment of the principles of reform, of the party platform, and of the executive pledges.

It is in strict conformity with the executive course thus far that it is announced that the Secretary of the Treasury has decided that when a state delegation in Congress has agreed upon "a slate" it shall be adopted without delay. The Secretary of the Interior, also, is reported to have said, that he is "willing and anxious to see the Democrats turned out and their places filled by good Republicans," and he declines to explain the remark. The Commissioner of Pensions in a public speech, in the presence of the Secretary of the Navy, stated with great applause that the President told him that in the conduct of his office "he should remember the limitations of the law and that he must treat the boys liberally."

In the Post-Office Department, the great patronage department of the government, the President's advice to the Commissioner of Pensions has been followed with unfaltering vigor. The fourth class postmasters of whom there are more than 50,000, whose offices under the spoils system are the universally disseminated local centres of party politics are removed as fast as the necessary official details will permit. A cyclone of change rages

in this department. Ability, energy, zeal, fidelity in the service, do not avail against the demand for spoils. The appointment of the first Assistant-Postmaster General who conducts the removals was in itself an earnest that this demand would be heeded, and it is not surprising that the immense and incessant changes in the minor post-offices are stated to have been sometimes made at the rate of one thousand a week, or one in three minutes. It will not be alleged that this general and ceaseless sweep is required by the welfare of the service. It is not denied that it is simple political proscription. One of the strongest of the chief Republican organs says frankly "the administration proposes without cant or false pretence to take the offices without making trumped-up, libellous charges against Democratic office-holders." It was, nevertheless, the solemn declaration of the party of administration that "the spirit and purpose of the reform should be observed in all executive appointments." And the spirit and purpose of the reform contemplate the removal of such officers as fourth-class postmasters solely for reasons connected with the service and excludes from their appointment all political considerations whatever.

While this contemptuous disregard of the pledges of the campaign is apparently universal in the treatment of the fourth-class post-offices, the events connected with the change in the chief Presidential post-office, that in New York, the most conspicuous and important in the country, have commanded universal public attention. This office had become under experienced, efficient and courageous administration, one of the best post-offices in the world. It was the most powerful and conclusive practical argument for civil service reform, and the triumphant illustration of the wisdom of the reform policy proclaimed by the Republican platform. Reform in this office which, by its immense business and enormous revenues, stands at the head of the postal system in the country, could have been maintained and advanced more effectively than in any other way simply by the reappoint-

ment of the postmaster, not because of any vested right in the office but because he was confessedly the fittest person in the country for the duty. In the event of his personal inability, the sole method of maintaining the reform policy, but much more inadequately, was the appointment of a successor of the qualities and convictions of the postmaster, a successor who would be very difficult to discover. In the interest of reform this was the simple and obvious course and no other would have been suggested or considered.

But the President decided that it should not be taken. He decided not to reappoint the postmaster under whom the office had been lifted out of mercenary politics and had become a conclusive vindication of the Republican policy of civil service reform. He decided also not to replace him with a successor of similar training in the postal service, of similar faith in the reformed system, of similar courage to enforce it in defiance of the machine. He appointed a gentleman, who, whatever his excellences of character and his qualifications for public office, was completely and notoriously identified with the political evils and abuses from which the post-office had been emancipated. The President decided that a change should be made and the change was a total surrender to the spoils system. It is now alleged that the reason was the Postmaster's illness. But the change as made shows conclusively that the illness was not the reason but a subsequent pretext, and that had the postmaster been in perfect health he would still have been removed. More than three weeks after the new appointment was made, although the postmaster was no longer living, his successor was still playing a game of party politics at Albany, and it was necessary to appoint a postmaster *ad interim*. The sole course by which the truthfulness of the alleged reason could be made probable would have been the appointment of a successor of the same convictions and purpose.

It is understood that this course was urged upon the Execu-

tive by one of his warm supporters and party friends. The Vice-President, as well as the President, was elected upon a platform of reform. He is a resident of New York and he knew, as all other good citizens knew that the post-office was a citadel of the reform which the platforms demanded. He knew how capable, upright and satisfactory the postmaster was. Was the Vice-President, perhaps the party friend who warmly urged the re-appointment? The senior Senator from New York is also a resident of the city and equally familiar with the facts. He has often and strongly professed his interest in the reform. Was he the urgent friend who to promote reform strenuously advocated the fulfilment of the party pledge and the pledge of the Executive? It should seem that if either of these high officers of the government, with whom upon such subjects the President is known to have consulted, had made a simple and earnest statement of the facts, and insisted that the reform which had been the party policy and was already triumphant in the post-office should not be abandoned, the surrender might at least have been stayed.

It is pleaded that reform may not be arrested because a large part of the subordinate places in the office are included in the classified service. But if the principles of the reformed service are still to prevail, in the office, why was not its control entrusted to a friend of reform? It is true that in his inaugural address the President announced that every public officer, "will be expected to enforce the civil service law fully and without evasion." But how can the President, himself the chief of public officers, keep his own oath to enforce that law except by confiding its execution to friends and not to foes? How can the declared reform policy of the party of administration be carried out except by those who believe in it? In a review of the course of the late President Cleveland in the early months of his administration Senator Hoar of Massachusetts said truly, "you cannot serve reform and the Democratic party." Not less truly may it be said

of the course thus far of President Harrison, you cannot serve reform and the Republican machine.

President Lincoln was elected upon a platform of the exclusion of slavery from the territories. If he had appointed a slaveholder to be Governor of a territory, he would have been justly accounted recreant to the principles and policy of his party. President Harrison by his action in regard to the New York post-office has brought into public contempt one of the fundamental declarations of the platform of his party. If his object had been to prostitute the public service in order to strengthen a party machine, he could have done nothing more effective. His course in this instance is a signal illustration of the abuse which his party platform condemns and which civil service reform that the platform adopts as a party policy, is intended to correct.

The circumstances of the death of Mr. Pearson, immediately following his removal were profoundly pathetic. His fatal illness was undoubtedly stimulated and aggravated by his heroic struggle to do his official duty against tremendous odds. His position and course honestly supported by his superior officers and encouraged in other offices would have been fatal to the venal politics and the mercenary prostitution of patronage which are the foundations of the machine. In fighting him the spoils system was fighting for its life. His official destruction was therefore the common cause of the machine in both parties. He stood firmly for the honest service of the people, his opponents, for their own selfish power. Unstained by those who meant to force him to retire, dogged by their emissaries seeking plausible pretexts for his removal, he resolved, if life were granted, not to yield, and for many a month, he silently fought the good fight while his life surely ebbed away. Those who without the responsibility of office advocate reform upon what they believe to be sound and simple principles may be easily condemned as sentimentalists and theorists. But the man who in a great office, amid every kind of malicious obstruction and active hostility, with unquailing steadfastness and the sacri-

fice of health and life, demonstrates the practical efficiency of those principles, furnishes the living and resistless argument by which great causes at last prevail. Dying at his post such a man is as truly a martyr to his country as the hero who falls in battle. We shall be indeed unworthy Americans, if a character so pure, a life so spotless, and a public service so great, do not consecrate us more devotedly than ever to the cause for which he died.

"It will be my sincere purpose if elected," said the President in accepting his nomination "to advance the reform." The word reform as used by the President and in the platform of his party has a definite meaning which was of course distinctly understood by him and by those who made the platform. It was not limited to the faithful execution of the civil service reform law, but was expressly declared to include in its spirit all appointments. It means the exclusion of politics from the great multitude of places in the civil service. It means dismissal from such places, only for reasons connected with the welfare of the service. It means that the service is not to be refilled with political partisans merely because of a party change of administration. This was the reform which the party adopted and the President pledged himself to advance. The annals of two months from which I have selected characteristic illustrations show how it has advanced thus far. We have certainly never shown a disposition to judge any Executive unfairly or without reasonable regard to the difficulties of the situation, as our comments upon the administrations of Presidents Arthur and Cleveland plainly attest. It is undeniable that immediate and total reform of an evil system is not to be expected and that serious mistakes and inconsistencies, unwise appointments and equally unwise removals are compatible with an honest desire and purpose of reform. But flagrant and deliberate violations of sound principles of the public service are not to be excused or palliated by the plea that they are mistakes and inconsistencies. Errors are pardonable but wrong acts consciously performed are not errors: they are offences for which the offender is justly responsible.

If the President regards himself as a trustee of his party he is trustee of a party which adopted civil service reform as its policy and declared that its spirit and purpose should be observed in all executive appointments. Yet not in one conspicuous instance, so far as I know, has the President observed that spirit and purpose, or ordered them to be observed. I do not mean of course that he has appointed no honest or capable officers but that he has not respected the principle that such officers in places which are not political, should not be removed for political reasons; nor do I know a single member of the Cabinet, a single Senator or Representative in Congress, or, with very few honorable exceptions like Mr. Theodore Roosevelt of New York, a single recognized local leader of the dominant party, who has publicly insisted that the declared policy of the party on this subject shall be respected. The administration senators and representatives who lingered in Washington after the adjournment of Congress did not remain to take care that the party policy of reform should be enforced, but, as office brokers and peddlers of patronage, to secure places for political workers, to procure party advantages, and to foster personal ambitions. They were not engaged in promoting the public welfare by excluding politics from the public service where politics are impertinent, but in tightening and strengthening by patronage a party machine. Meanwhile the party clubs, Leagues and Committees, all over the Union, have shown by their conduct the confident expectation that no regard would be paid by the administration to the platform promises and pledges under which in the campaign the support of intelligent citizens friendly to reform was solicited. With very few honorable exceptions the press of the party has demanded the usual political proscription in the civil service, or it has acquiesced in the practical contempt of the declared party policy, or it has truculently defended the plainest neglect of principle as real reform. The chief party organ in the country frankly defended the overthrow of reform in the New York Post-office by the assertion that, "It is certain that party

organization cannot be maintained by ignoring party leaders," which is the old and fundamental plea for the spoils system.

The only signs of party interest in the party declarations that I have observed are first the statement that a representative from Massachusetts has presented a petition of the merchants of Boston asking that the Collector of that port may serve out his term; a proceeding which assumes, and not unnaturally, that the Collector for political reasons would be summarily dismissed. Let that little candle throw its beams as far as possible. Second: It is reported from Washington, although there is no other notification, that the President does not propose the removal of satisfactory officers until the expiration of their terms. Should this rumor prove to be correct, and some such officers are not yet removed, such a course would be so far a distinct measure of reform, as it would assure the continuance of some officers throughout almost the term of the administration. It would destroy the precedent of what is called a clean sweep and demonstrate that a general party change of incumbents is necessary neither to good service nor to party organization. This, however, is but the rumor of an intention. We are concerned, now, with the actual conduct of the executive, and I doubt if any candid observer of that conduct would declare that at last a party has come into control of the administration which, according to its solemn assertion that it would not violate its pledges, has thus far proved that it means honestly to advance Civil-Service Reform.

In what I have said I have tested the administration not only by the principles of reform but by the specific declarations and pledges of the party which it represents. Our Association is strictly non-partisan and I venture to say on its behalf that, whatever may be the personal political sympathies of its members, they would all have equally rejoiced if it could be said truthfully that the declarations of the dominant party were in process of faithful fulfilment. It would be a vital error, however, to suppose that the situation indicates profound public indifference to reform.

It shows only that we have constantly asserted that neither party as a party is a civil-service reform party. Their declarations of interest, however, are tributes to a powerful public sentiment which has already exacted from both parties certain great and definite gains for reform. That sentiment is constantly increasing and constantly weakening the force of party ties. The dangers to free institutions which the Republican platform declared to lurk in the power of official patronage, become only the more evident when the public pledges of a party are deliberately condemned by its administration. But the public intelligence and conscience to which those pledges appeal are not unobservant of practical neglect of them. The political degradation and corruption, the ruin of the proper function of party in a republic, the destruction of the self-respect of public employees, the vast and increasing venality of elections, constitute the dangers which are denounced by the Republican platform. The more plainly these dangers are seen and the character of the system revealed from which they chiefly spring, the more thoroughly aroused will be the public mind, and the more certain and complete will be the remedy.*

* Since this address was delivered the President by the appointment of Mr. Theodore Roosevelt of New York and Mr. Hugh S. Thompson of South Carolina, and the retention of Mr. Charles Lyman of Connecticut, as Civil Service Commissioners, has so far redeemed the pledges of the Republican platform and of his own letter of acceptance. The excellence of this act is heartily acknowledged by the sincerest friends of reform, who would be the first to hail frankly and unreservedly, a course consistent with its spirit and promise.

REPORT

OF THE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

OF THE

NEW YORK CIVIL-SERVICE REFORM ASSOCIATION.

READ AT THE ANNUAL MEETING, MAY 1, 1889.

FOR the second time since the reform law was passed, the Association meets immediately after a change in the party control of the general government. Such a period is, and must continue to be for years to come, most critical to the cause in which we are enlisted. Only when the reformed system shall have become firmly entrenched in the knowledge and the faith of the great mass of the people, so that partisan managers realize that their personal interest requires a strict adherence to the policy which the law in part indicates, will the danger of retrogression be so far removed as to permit the Civil-Service reformer to look forward to a change of administration, and especially to a change in party control, without grave apprehension.

At the annual meeting of the Association held on the 7th of May, 1888, the following officers were elected:

President.

GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS.

Vice-Presidents.

JOHN JAY,	WILLIAM E. DODGE,
CARL SCHURZ,	D. WILLIS JAMES,
FRANCIS C. BARLOW,	OSWALD OTTENDORFER,
ORLANDO B. POTTER,	HORACE E. DEMING.

Secretary.

WILLIAM POTTS.

Treasurer.

IRA BURSLEY.

Executive Committee.

EVERETT P. WHEELER, Chairman,

SILAS W. BURT,	GEO. HAVEN PUTNAM,
EDWARD CARY,	THEODORE ROOSEVELT,
CHARLES COLLINS,	EDWARD M. SHEPARD,
GEO. WALTON GREEN,	ALEX. MACKAY-SMITH,
ELIAL F. HALL,	WM. H. THOMSON,
WALTER HOWE,	HORACE WHITE,
A. R. MACDONOUGH,	F. W. WHITRIDGE.

At the same time section seven of the constitution was amended to read as follows:

"There shall be an annual meeting of the Association in the month of May at such time and place as may be designated by the Executive Committee, at which officers shall be elected for the ensuing year, and other appropriate business may be transacted."

At a meeting of the Executive Committee held after the adjournment of the annual meeting, Mr. Wheeler was re-elected Chairman, Mr. Potts and Mr. Bursley were respectively re-elected Secretary and Treasurer, and the several standing Committees, were re-constituted, as follows:

Publication Committee.

CHARLES COLLINS, Chairman, GEO. WILLIAM CURTIS,
E. L. GODKIN, GEORGE R. BISHOP,
WILLIAM POTTS.

Committee on Legislation.

FRED. W. WHITRIDGE, Chairman, CARL SCHURZ,
GEO. WALTON GREEN, FRANCIS L. STETSON,
EVERETT P. WHEELER.

Auditing Committee.

ELIAL F. HALL, Chairman, CHARLES COLLINS.

Committee on Finance.

ANSON PHELPS STOKES, Chairman, EDWARD B. MERRILL,
HENRY VILLARD, J. HAMPDEN ROBB,
SAMUEL P. AVERY.

Committee on Affiliated Societies.

JACOB F. MILLER, Chairman, WILLIAM POTTS,
JOHN B. PINE, HAMILTON B. TOMPKINS,
HENRY T. TERRY.

Committee on Civil-Service Examinations.

EDWARD CARY, Chairman, A. R. MACDONOUGH,
DORMAN B. EATON, CARL SCHURZ,
C. W. WATSON.

At the March meeting of the Executive Committee Mr. Cary resigned his membership in the Committee on Civil Service Examinations.

We are glad to be able to report that no call has been made upon the subscribers to our guaranty fund, and that we still have a balance of not far short of a thousand dollars in the treasury. Such being the fact it is probable that we shall find no difficulty in obtaining the consent of the subscribers to this fund, to the continuance of their guarantee. At the same time we trust that our members will be hereafter as heretofore sufficiently prompt

and generous in their contributions to make any draft upon this fund wholly unnecessary.

The Civil Service Record is still sent to our paying members, at the expense of the Association.

We have to welcome the Civil-Service Chronicle, published at Indianapolis, Indiana, to the ranks of the periodicals wholly devoted to the reform movement. We have subscribed for a number of copies of this exceedingly valuable publication, to be sent to the members of the Executive Committee, and would urge those interested in the work to assist it so far as they may be able.

The Association having a large accumulation of documents in its office, it was thought advisable during the winter to make a special effort for their distribution. Circulars were therefore extensively issued to our members and others, offering copies to such as could make proper use of them, and many packages were distributed to libraries and individuals. It is still possible to furnish copies of many publications, and those who can employ them to advantage will confer a favor by so stating to the Secretary.

The Secretary has had opportunity on several occasions during the year to address attentive audiences on the subject of reform, and holds himself in readiness to do so on other occasions should opportunity arise.

At the meeting of the Executive Committee held in March last, a Committee consisting of Messrs. Eaton, Macdonough, and Potts was appointed to consider and report from time to time concerning the working of the reform laws; and to propose amendments or extensions of the laws, should such amendments or extensions be deemed advisable. In the adaptation of an effective system of appointment and removal to the conditions existing in the national service and of the service of the several states, cities, etc., it will doubtless be found that experience will dictate certain changes from the scheme originally proposed, and the establishment of certain safeguards which may not at first

have been deemed necessary, and it is for the purpose of having attention promptly called to such that this Committee has been appointed.

At the same meeting attention was called to the fact that during the coming year, four new states are to be formed in the great Northwest and measures were taken to bring to the attention of those actively engaged in preparing their fundamental laws the desirability of carefully guarding the Civil Service to be thereby established, and thus avoiding some of the evils through which the older states have been compelled to struggle at a great disadvantage.

The last annual meeting of the National Civil-Service Reform League was held on the 29th and 30th of May, in the City of New York. It was largely attended by our members as well as by very many others both from this City and distant places, and was generally felt to be most interesting and useful.

The New York State Commission appointed a few months before our last annual meeting, has issued the report of its first year's work, in which is shown a clear apprehension of its character and a disposition to adhere strictly to the principle which lies at the foundation of the reformed system.

From this report it appears that the Roster prepared by the late Chief Examiner, has been used to great advantage, and through it have been revealed many irregularities not hitherto known, which will be tabulated in the appendix. The appendix will also contain among other valuable matter, the various judicial decisions and opinions which have been rendered in the Courts of this and other States and of the United States, in construction of the Civil Service acts, rules and regulations, the same having been compiled by the Secretary of this Association. This will be found exceedingly valuable.

We are glad to note a strong expression of the judgment of the Commission in favor of competitive as against non-competitive examinations, founded upon the results of their experience with both.

Shortly after the annual meeting of the Association the Court of Appeals rendered its decision in the "Killeen case," which had been brought by this Association to test the question whether the State Department of Public Works and the Department of State Prisons were properly under the Civil Service Law. The decision of the Court was adverse to the position taken by the Association. It is to be noted, however, that notwithstanding this decision the Superintendent of Prisons has continued until recently to authorize requisitions from the eligible lists provided by the Civil Service Commission. It is now becoming customary to make appointments without such reference.

Successful litigation has been had under the auspices of our sister Associations in Rochester and Buffalo, but new cases are constantly arising which require our careful watchfulness.

No serious adverse legislation has occurred during the present session of the Legislature nor has any bill been passed improving or extending the system. As usual, several bills have been introduced, intended to weaken or destroy it, under pretence of assisting veteran soldiers and sailors, but we are informed that there is no danger of either becoming law. The first of the pending bills was introduced by Mr. Endres of Erie and calls for a popular vote at the next general election, to determine whether the reformed system shall be continued or discontinued. This is undoubtedly prompted by a desire to obtain a nominal vote against the system through the activity of the party machines as opposed to the indifferentism of those who have no personal interest involved, who of course form the vast majority. Another, introduced by Senator Murphy, makes the appointment or employment of honorably discharged soldiers and sailors imperative in every public department and upon all public works of the state, and of the cities, towns and villages thereof. This is similar in intention to numerous other bills which have appeared from time to time to debauch and embarrass the public service under the plea of rewarding patriotic services performed during the late war,—efforts

which are repudiated by none with such indignation and contempt as by those who themselves did most honorable service in that conflict. Of a similar character is a bill introduced by Mr. Kelly which undertakes to hamper still further the discipline of public offices by compelling a hearing in the case of veterans whom their superiors may find it necessary to remove. We have repeatedly stated with the utmost clearness that in our judgment no removals should be made in any case, except for just cause, which should be matter of public record; but we must continue to protest against the singling out for favor of a certain class, and against what appears to be a requirement of a formal trial before a removal becomes possible.

The Secretary appeared before the Judiciary Committee of the House on the 24th of April in opposition to the most objectionable of the pending measures, and was afforded an opportunity of stating the feelings of the members of the Association regarding it, and similar efforts.

There has been some consultation touching a proposition to introduce into the Legislature a Constitutional amendment, authorizing the Legislature to subject the State Departments of Public Works and of Prisons to the operation of the reformed system, but it has been thought wisest to allow the matter to stand over for consideration in a Constitutional convention, which it is not probable will be much longer delayed.

In the city of New York the members of the Supervisory Board under which the municipal system was devised and put into operation have resigned upon request, and in their place Mayor Grant appointed: Messrs. James Thompson, Henry Marquand, and William Hildreth Field. Subsequently the very efficient Secretary and Chief Examiner Mr. Lee Phillips, was removed, and his place was filled by the appointment of Mr. Gunther K. Ackerman. We shall gladly acknowledge any advance in the administration of the Municipal Civil Service which may follow as a result of these changes, and shall condemn without hesita-

tion, if unhappily there should appear to result therefrom any cause for condemnation.

In the neighboring city of Brooklyn the system continues to work admirably through the efforts of the Commission appointed in January, 1888, under the exceedingly efficient chairmanship of Mr. Edward M. Shepard.

The report of the Massachusetts Civil Service Commission, shows steady progress in the prosecution of the work, with less damage from the veteran preference than would have resulted had not the courts held that this preference could only be acquired through the regular channel of the Commission. Progress has been made in the extension of the system of registration for laborers which has been found so useful. It is unfortunate that we have not yet availed ourselves of this method of lessening the prevalent evils of partisan manipulation of minor positions to the great detriment of the laborers themselves as well as the people at large.

Early in the year a Committee of the United States Senate under the Chairmanship of Senator Hale, entered upon the investigation of charges of irregularities in the matter of appointments and removals in the Customs service of this port. Many complaints had been made to the Association and statements had been filed in its office bearing upon such irregularities, and in order that every facility should be afforded for an exhaustive investigation these matters were placed in the hands of John B. Pine, Esq., who appeared before the Committee. He placed upon record the statement "that the Association did not appear in these proceedings as prosecutor or complainant; that it had made no charges of violations of the Civil-Service law, but the wide-spread belief that the law had been disregarded by Custom House officials at the port of New York had led the Association to make inquiries for the purpose of ascertaining the truth or falsity of this impression; that the Association had endeavored to ascertain the actual facts of the case without regard

to parties or individuals; that witnesses were present who were prepared to testify from their own knowledge and experience as to the operations of the Civil-Service law in the Custom House."

The investigation was proceeded with and at its conclusion Mr. Pine made a report to this Committee showing that irregularities had actually occurred which were of a serious character, and the most startling feature of which was the doubt cast upon the judgment and integrity of certain members of the local Civil Service Board. The reports subsequently made by the Senate Committee, both majority and minority, were so far colored by partisanship that their value was much injured.

In some other cities, as for example in Baltimore, like complaints were made, and apparently upon even a stronger basis of fact. That similar conditions have existed in Washington and elsewhere does not appear. But the evidence is most conclusive, that the contention uniformly made by the Association that to have the law honestly administered it is essential that loyal supporters of it should be appointed to administer it, is irrefutable.

So far as appears, there was less money collected during the last campaign from assessments upon national office-holders than has usually been harvested by the political committees. That this nefarious business has entirely ceased however, is not true, and some amendment to the law is required as well as a more faithful spirit in its enforcement.

At the October meeting of the Committee the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

"*Resolved*, That this Committee regards the recently published circular of General S. V. Benet of the Ordnance office, addressed to the Superintendents of the armories and arsenals of the United States as a violation of the fundamental principle which should govern appointments in the public service. Whatever may be the purpose of the circular it recognizes in terms and for the first time, partisan considerations as properly determining the selection of employés in the War Department. It thus accomplishes

precisely what is declared not to be its intention for it necessarily converts the armories and arsenals into political machines. The sole principle which should govern the selection of men, women and children for employment in armories and arsenals is their fitness and not their political views or sympathies, and it is to be deeply regretted that the War Department should in this instance have formally abandoned that principle and have substituted a political test for employment instead of asking the application of the Civil Service rules to armories and arsenals."

The election in November turned mainly upon questions not connected with the work of the Association, and it was for a time thought by many that public attention had been permanently turned away from the subject with which it is occupied. Nothing could have been wider from the truth. The shameless struggle for appointments to office which immediately ensued, — a struggle probably unexampled in this or any other country, drew attention to the evils of the prevalent system as perhaps no other event could have done, and ere long the press throughout the country was giving greater prominence to the question of Civil-Service Reform in some of its aspects than to any other. The incoming administration had pledged itself in the most explicit manner through the party platform and the candidate's letter of acceptance, to the enforcement of the law according to its letter and spirit, and while charging the outgoing administration with unfaithfulness to the cause, had promised that this should not be the case with it. At the December meeting of the Committee, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

"*Resolved*, That the declarations and pledges of the Republican platform and the views expressed by the President elect in his letter of acceptance justify the hope that the progress in Civil Service Reform already secured will be maintained and extended.

"*Resolved*, That honest thorough and effective enforcement of the Civil Service law of January 1883 can be assured only by

placing sincere friends of reform at the heads of all offices in which the service is classified.

"*Resolved*, That a general system of removals from the public service upon a party change of administration, under the plea of correcting the injustice of previous removals is the very evil that reform seeks to correct. Reform could never begin if honest and efficient officers devoted to their duty and not offensively partisan, although appointed for political reasons should be removed for precisely the same reasons to make place for partisans of the removing power. This would be the clean sweep with the consequent demoralization of the public service and of politics which good citizens of all parties deplore.

"*Resolved*, That the interference of members of Congress with the exercise of the executive power of appointment and removal, and the laws which by prescribing a fixed term for inferior offices facilitate a clean sweep of the civil service every four years, are the chief bulwarks of the spoils system and that the remedy lies in the repeal of the four years laws and the prevention of the interference of members of Congress in executive appointments.

"*Resolved*, That removals from the public service, with the exception of certain political officers, should be made only for reasons connected with the character and efficiency of the service and that hereafter as heretofore, we will heartily and unitedly sustain every effort of the national administration to emancipate the non-political service of the government from mere partisan control.

"*Resolved*, That the Chairman of the Executive Committee and the Secretary, together with the Committee on Legislation be authorized and requested to take such steps as they may see fit to urge or promote the immediate passage of the bills heretofore recommended by the Association for the repeal of the so-called four years laws."

On the 23rd of February a conference was held in the City of Baltimore, which was attended by many persons interested in

the reform movement, from different sections of the country, and among them by a number of members of this Committee. The action of the meeting was perfectly harmonious and established the fact that entire unanimity exists among the friends of reform irrespective of their political affiliations, as to the objects to be gained, the methods to be used and the tests which must be applied to official action.

The actual change in the administration was naturally looked forward to with solicitude. It would be a great satisfaction to us, if we were able to say that this solicitude had been in any wise relieved. It is too early to weigh the administration and we must hope that its general action may be such as to further the cause of reform: but the character of many of the appointments already made; the fact that they clearly have not been made upon the grounds stated in the President's letter of acceptance; the fact that the two vacancies long existing in the membership of the National Civil Service Commission have not yet been filled, although that Commission is notoriously over-worked; the fact that the postponement of the enforcement in the Railway Mail Service of the Civil Service rules established by President Cleveland has been taken advantage of to make a vast number of removals and appointments in that service; and the fact that fourth-class postmasters are being removed and others appointed in unprecedented numbers, all tend to check any very sanguine anticipations on the part of the most hopeful.

When to these facts we add the tragedy of the removal and death of Postmaster Pearson of New York, a man known throughout the length and breadth of the land as a devoted public officer, pure and simple, and as the embodiment of the best qualities which can be shown by an administrative officer,— whose life was crushed out between the upper and nether millstones of partisan politics and combinations of selfish interests; a removal to give place to an appointee having no experience whatever in a business full of details and enormous in its extent and responsibilities, —

we still feel that we must reserve our judgment in regard to the proportion of condemnation which should be decreed to individuals, but as honest and faithful men must record anew our pledge to hold to the strictest responsibility those who are shown to be guilty, and never to relax our efforts until the accursed system which is now corrupting and degrading our country shall have been wholly extirpated.

The fourth report of the National Commission which had been long delayed, was finally published last summer, and was a voluminous and very useful history of the work of its earlier years. The fifth report has not yet been sent out.

No national legislation of special importance to our movement has been effected during the year. After consultation and careful consideration it was determined that an active effort for the repeal of the so-called four years laws, should be postponed until the next session of Congress, it being made clear to us that there was no possibility of obtaining proper consideration of the bill at the short session. The motion of Senator Teller, made just before adjournment, seems to promise also an active prosecution of the effort to obtain open executive sessions for the consideration of nominations, upon the success of which effort we believe that much depends.

In conclusion we would again congratulate our associates that in so short a time so much has been accomplished. We feel that we can safely do this in full view of a defiance of the spirit and some cases of the letter of the law by persons in high official places. But we would also renew the caution that we have still before us an unwearied and unwearying enemy, in the great body of self seeking politicians of both parties, and that we shall not have accomplished our work until we shall have fully aroused the great body of voters to a determination that the infamous spoils system shall be wiped out of existence, at whatever expense to the men who profit by it. To-day we enter upon the second centennial period of our national existence. We have much to

feel grateful for, in the accomplishments of the past, much to fill us with hope for the future; but serious danger to our country is still threatening, and it rests with the people of to-day to see to it that its fair fame shall not be sacrificed to personal and partisan greed, but that that devotion which its sons have shown in great emergencies shall become as it is not now, their characteristic in the daily administration of the affairs of government.

Respectfully submitted,

EVERETT P. WHEELER,
Chairman,

WILLIAM POTTS,
Secretary.

NEW YORK, May 1, 1889.

Annual Statement of the Treasurer, Civil-Service Reform Association of New York.

Dr.

1889.			
April 23.	Balance on hand as per acc't rendered		$1,617.98
	Received for annual dues	$1,965.00	
	" " subscriptions	595.00	
	" " documents	1.87	
	" " int. from Trust Co.	13.53	
	" " amount advanced for expenses (ret'd).	100.00	
			$2,675.40
			$4,293.38
	Cash in Mechanics' Bank	$339.07	
	" " N. Y. Life Ins. and Trust Co.	551.76	
			$890.83

Cr.

EXPENDITURES.

Rent of office and meeting-rooms	$349.96	
Salary of Secretary	1,040.18	
" " T. G. Killeen	329.15	
" " R. H. Donaldson	48.00	
Office expenses, including printing, stenographer, postage, etc., etc	708.17	
Commission for collecting	45.00	
Lawyers' bills	596.84	
Subscriptions to *Civil Service Record*	81.25	
" " *Congressional Record*	4.00	
" " League	100.00	
Advance for expenses (returned)	100.00	
		$3,402.55
Balance on hand this date		890.83
		$4,293.38

E. & O. E.

NEW YORK, April 22, 1889.

IRA BURSLEY,
Treasurer.

RESOLUTIONS.

The following resolutions were unanimously adopted at the Annual Meeting:

Resolved, That the chief present danger to the government is the rapidly-increasing corruption of elections, of which the enormous official salary fund expended under the form of patronage is one source; and that Civil-Service Reform by regulating that expenditure upon sound business principles largely removes the opportunity and means of corruption and is therefore the most pressingly important question now before the country.

Resolved, That the platform of the successful party and the letter of acceptance of the successful candidate at the last national election were a solemn public engagement that reform in the civil service would be the policy of the administration.

Resolved, That with the most friendly disposition to make just allowance for the difficulties and perplexities arising from the traditions of the spoils system, it is impossible not to regard the great change which is taking place in the civil service, for merely partisan reasons, and not for reasons relating to the greater honesty and efficiency of the service, as a signal illustration of the evil which it is the object of reform to correct, and therefore as a flagrant violation of the pledges solemnly given to the country.

Resolved, That we shall gladly welcome and acknowledge every indication upon the part of the administration of a faithful regard for the principles of reform and for the engagements of the platform, and for every unmistakable act and effort which shall

tend wisely and effectually to avert the dangers to free institutions which lurk in the power of executive patronage.

Resolved, That the interference of Senators and Representatives with the appointing power of the executive is in open contempt of the constitution which carefully separates the executive and legislative powers, except in certain specified cases in which the assent of the Senate as an organized body is essential to the completion of an executive appointment; and that the surrender of this power to Senators and Representatives is an abandonment of the responsibility imposed upon the Executive by the Constitution.

Resolved, That the action recently taken by the legislature of New York by the representatives of both parties, which is popularly known as a "deal" designed to secure a division of patronage, plainly reveals the destructive effect of the spoils system upon the proper function of parties by making them merely organizations to facilitate mercenary combinations for the common advantage.

HENRY GEORGE PEARSON,

(late Postmaster at New York),

— AS —

PUBLIC OFFICER AND REFORMER.

BY DORMAN B. EATON.

IN the month of May, twelve years ago, seventeen persons, of whom Henry George Pearson was one, deeply impressed with the need of some strenuous endeavor for removing abuses in the public service, met together in this city and formed this earliest of all the civil service reform associations of the country. The whole official life of Mr. Pearson since that time, and the causes of his premature and tragic death, are intimately associated not only with the principles which the association seeks to establish, but with the most difficult and successful efforts for their enforcement. Justice to him, fidelity to these principles and to the public interests alike require that the leading facts of Mr. Pearson's life and the causes of his death should be at this time clearly understood by the people. Paramount among these principles was this: That the business offices of the Government, of which Post-offices are good examples, will be best administered by subordinating all mere partisan demands and interests to the general welfare by making every appointment on the basis of merit and allowing no removal except for good cause. In this principle Mr. Pearson had a profound faith, which grew stronger until he died. He insisted on open competition for appointments, and that the prizes should go to applicants of superior merit. He held that in the very nature of public business there could no more be a Re-

publican or a Democratic way of doing it than there could be a Presbyterian way or a Baptist way. He insisted that such a merit system of office should be substituted for the spoils system as an essential condition of national safety. In his own office, he enforced this merit system with absolute fidelity.

Mr. Pearson's own advancement illustrates the soundness of his principles. With only the ordinary school education, a brave spirit and an honest purpose to do his duty to aid him, he secured, in 1860 when but fifteen years of age, from General Dix then postmaster at New York, the humble position of stamper, the lowest place above that of a mere laborer. By fidelity and tireless devotion to duty, unaided by influence or party, he gained universal confidence and rapid promotion. Between 1860 and 1881, when he was made postmaster, he had served in every intermediate position of importance—as clerk of several grades in the post-office, as Railway Mail clerk on the line between New York and Washington, as chief clerk on that line, as special agent of the Post-office Department, as superintendent of mails, as Chairman of the Post-office Board of Examiners, as Assistant Postmaster—in every place doing the best work and giving the highest satisfaction; except that he was once dismissed for not more frequently leaving his official post to work for his party, but he was speedily restored because his services had become indispensable. The dislike of party managers and office seekers for Mr. Pearson began at this time and never grew less. In the very nature of things, there was an irrepressible conflict between his theories and aims, and theirs.

With tireless zeal and patriotic devotion, he gave almost daily hours of extra and often of midnight toil, in co-operation with Postmaster James, to the novel and difficult work of carrying forward to success, during the administration of President Hayes, the first attempts to enforce those principles of civil service reform in the New York Post-office. These experiments, and the great improvements in the postal service which resulted from them, (aided by labor of the same kind under Colonel Burt in the cus-

toms service), arrested the attention of the country, made the reform of the civil service a real issue in politics, and commanded the respect of President Garfield, who appointed Mr. James Postmaster-General and Mr. Pearson Postmaster at New York in 1881. This was the first instance in which a president or party had been wise enough to give either of these offices to a man of well-tested competency for filling it.

Thus assured of faithful support at Washington, Mr. Pearson entered upon the enforcement of the merit system of office with rigid completeness and absolute impartiality, closing every place against official favoritism and partisan coercion, and not even reserving to be filled at his mere pleasure the positions covered by his official bond to the government.

It was the striking improvements in economy and efficiency at the New York Post-office, under Mr. Pearson, which, as much as any other cause, developed the public opinion that enforced the enactment of the Civil Service act in 1883. And in all the difficulties of its early enforcement, his experience, example and support, and that of Colonel Burt in the customs service, were invaluable. Had Mr. Pearson done nothing more, he would have deserved the gratitude of the country.

The undertaking of Mr. Pearson, in its first stages, was difficult enough at the best, for the whole politician class were the natural enemies of the reform methods he enforced. The death of President Garfield greatly changed the situation at Washington. He was quite generally believed to have been a victim of the spoils system. The opportunities of that system were thought to be much improved. The enemies of reform in both parties—every officer and politician who wanted a place for his henchman—naturally enough took courage. The inherent antagonism between the old spoils system and the new merit system became conspicuous. If the latter should triumph, it was plain that those who live by the former would lose their power, their occupation and their income.

Finding it beyond their power to intimidate Mr. Pearson, the confederated enemies of the new system in whose ranks were several high officers at Washington and among them the Postmaster-General who succeeded Mr. James, resolved to compel his removal. No possible effort for that purpose was spared.

The reasons for the attack upon him are easy enough to understand. He would not give easy positions, high salaries or long furloughs to the favorites of these officials. He refused places to the henchmen of great politicians. He would not allow post-office clerks or carriers to be made the menial servants of party managers and bosses. He protected his employees, as far as possible, against assessments for filling party treasuries or carrying city elections.

What right had Mr. Pearson to depart from the old customs by thus treating the public interests as paramount to official favoritism and party schemes? What right had a mere postmaster to insist that a faithful clerk, who had won his place by superior merit, should not be turned out to make a vacancy for some favorite noodle of the Postmaster-General or some valiant "heeler" of a state or city Boss? Such presumption was intolerable!

The unexampled efficiency and economy of the New York Post-office, of which the whole country more and more took notice, were a conspicuous condemnation of the whole partisan system and an unendurable offense and peril, in the eyes of the great chiefs of the spoils system. They clearly saw that the two systems could not long continue side by side in the same city. Mr. Pearson must be crushed at all events—no matter by what means.

President Arthur, knowing and respecting not only Mr. Pearson but the better public opinion of New York by which he was supported, refused to yield to clandestine and tireless efforts made for his removal. We may believe he comprehended its folly as well as its injustice. And here it should be mentioned, as an equally striking illustration of the sagacity of President Arthur and

of the rare moral courage and sense of justice of Mr. Pearson, that a little before this time of extreme peril, Mr. Pearson had refused to promote a post-office clerk even on the written request of Vice-President Arthur, explaining in his reply to the Vice-President, that the clerk could have won the higher place sought had he given half the attention to his duties which he had given to efforts for securing it by influence. Nevertheless, President Arthur—perhaps not without some admiration for a sense of duty which so boldly confronted him—refused to remove so worthy a postmaster. Whether President Arthur was aware of the efforts of his Postmaster-General to supplant Mr. Pearson may be doubtful.

Thus defeated in their general attack, the enemies of the merit system made false, specific charges, very artfully and spaciously framed, to the effect that Postmaster Pearson had been unfaithful to the government. They surreptitiously procured a written opinion from President Arthur's Attorney-General to the effect that if these charges were true Mr. Pearson was liable to indictment. Several adroit party managers at New York were concerned in this mean business. These charges were for several months kept a secret from Mr. Pearson. President Arthur appears to have regarded them as baseless, for he refused, to the end of his term, to disturb Mr. Pearson by reason of them—if indeed he knew their exact purport.

Mr. Pearson's position under President Arthur was made yet more difficult by hostile influences from the Post-office department and from the corrupt factions of both parties, which not only defeated adequate appropriation and the supply of the necessary number of clerks for his office but in various ways obstructed his plans for doing the public work in the most efficient manner. He was subjected to needless and vexatious investigations, at the hands of persons whose minds at first were greatly prejudiced against him by the false charges and insinuations of these enemies. Nevertheless, these investigations resulted in reports some-

times suppressed at the post-office department because it was unwilling to have Mr. Pearson vindicated before the public, which, when they shall be made public, will not only advance Mr. Pearson in the estimation of the people, but will expose his persecutors to just indignation. This kind of injustice and persecution, and other annoyances in the same spirit, did not end with the term of President Arthur, but were in various ways continued until Mr. Pearson's death, of which they were in large part the cause. It could not be reasonably expected that a great organ of a party, which would not allow such a man as Mr. Pearson to continue to hold the place in the public service he had thus honored, would be anxious to disclose all the facts of his cruel and disgraceful persecution and death. These words, therefore, from the editorial columns of the New York *Tribune* of 22d of April last, are all the more creditable to its candor and courage: Indeed, they do not leave much to inference. "Mr. Pearson's "breakdown (it says), was undoubtedly due to his over-zealous "efforts to meet to some extent with his own strength the diffi- "culties of the situation. It is a most extraordinary circumstance "that the New York post-office has never been able to get justice "from Congress. The appropriations have been uniformly cut "down below the amount absolutely needed for a proper discharge "of its functions as the chief office of the country. Let us not "blink the facts or look to mere surface causes when the whole "disgraceful truth ought to be known." Certainly, let us have all the facts, without blinking, and they are these: Congress failed to make the appropriations in part because it was deceived by the false representations of the partisan band of conspirators who had resolved to drive Mr. Pearson from office, or to break him down. The other reason why Congress failed to make them was because the majority of its members favored the old spoils system and hoped the new system would fail at New York. Nor did any journal of the dominant party even put the facts plainly before Congress. The leaders of neither of the great parties would con-

sent to have the truth spoken. And more than this: there was not in either House of Congress, from New York City, a single member who had the moral courage to do justice to her postmaster, at the peril of offending the party managers. These facts, added to what the *Tribune* says, makes the explanation complete. They go below surface causes. They disclose a cowardly subserviency to "the machine" on the part of Congressmen and party journals of New York, by which the truth was suppressed and a noble officer was made to suffer.

The thoroughness and rigor with which Mr. Pearson enforced the civil service act and the popular appreciation of his patriotic work which more and more found emphatic expression in all the business and nonpartisan circles of the country, only aroused the enemies of the merit system to more desperate exertions for capturing its entrenchments. The election of Mr. Cleveland as President greatly changed the situation for the persecuted and overworked New York postmaster. His enemies confidently believed that the reproduction of their old charges and the use of their influence before a President elected by a party opposed to that to which Mr. Pearson adhered, would easily prevent his re-appointment in 1885.

Unknown to Mr. Pearson, the conspirators for his overthrow repeated the old charges, which he had never seen. They clandestinely used their influence to the utmost and presented these charges before President Cleveland very soon after his inauguration. These conspirators were as utterly incapable of conceiving of a sense of justice in a president which would give an adherent of another party in office an opportunity to defend himself against secret charges, as they were of imagining a patriotism which would re-appoint such an officer, simply because he was the most fit person for the place to be filled. They believed they had the persecuted postmaster at their mercy; and they had far rather have a partisan democrat than a republican reformer or an independent at the head of the greatest post-office in the country.

Mr. Pearson had, of course, some sense of his peril; but, with the repose and faith which were always characteristic of him, he did nothing to avert it, but to work many extra hours at his office, and far into the night at his home, to give the people of New York City the best postal service which the country had ever seen. He neither went to Washington to beg, nor to the party camp of the conspirators to bargain. He did not appeal to any senator or member of the House from New York City to keep him in office. Not one of them had aided him or spoke a word for him in his long struggle. What could he expect of them in his distress? He simply invented better methods and stimulated those under him for greater exertions, by which two dollars might secure the services for which three had been necessary, and three men might do the work for which four had been required. And what else could he do?

The conspirators were bitterly disappointed. For President Cleveland granted Mr. Pearson a hearing. The charges were proven to be utterly false. President Cleveland who, before seeing the answer of Mr. Pearson had declared "he would not continue "him in his office if he were the best democrat in New York," after reading the answer, promptly re-appointed him. Mr. Pearson had thus, by his noble devotion to duty and invaluable services to the country, made his own re-appointment the first conspicuous example of an administration giving a great office to an adherent of an opposing party, because he was the most fit person for the place.

After being thus approved by two presidents of one party and by one of the other, it seemed likely to all men not well versed in spoils system politics, that the New York postmaster would be allowed to go on with his great work of improving the public service without peril from the managers of either party. It was not to be so. The sin of carrying on the work of a great office, on business principles, of refusing to take and obey orders from party manipulators, was unpardonable. The enemies of the

merit system in both parties continued to prevent his having an adequate supply of money, clerks or carriers. They embarrassed him in all the old ways and some ways that were new. All he could do was to improve his methods and increase his labors to the utmost, in his heroic efforts to keep up with the rapidly increasing business of his office. Democratic partisans were as anxious, as republican partisans now are, for spoils. They could not tolerate the man who kept the doors shut against them. Though overtaxed by labors which no constitution could long bear, Mr. Pearson dispensed with his secretary and personally conducted his large correspondence, so that he might use the salary of that officer for employing several boys where they were greatly needed. The most competent judge in the country has declared, since Mr. Pearson's death, and it has been broadly published and accepted without challenge, that he had carried forward that work at only four-fifths of its proper cost and that an additional sum of $400,000 a year will be required for doing it in the future.

Nothing meaner, nothing more cruel and unjust, nothing that can more fitly arouse the indignation of all candid and patriotic minds has occurred in our politics than this persecution of postmaster Pearson. An officer whose public services were more valuable than all those rendered at the same time by every man in Congress from this great metropolis, has been worked and harassed to death and deprived of his office when on his deathbed, without one manly effort or protest on their part.

The labors and responsibility of a postmaster at New York would strain the powers of an able man even when free from the harassment to which Mr. Pearson was subjected. In the year 1888, more than 808,000,000 pieces of mail matter or nearly 2,500,000 each day, were handled by 2425 men at its post-office. The business of the main office, and of the sixteen local stations, at New York, was little less than that done at the sixteen largest cities of the Union altogether, excluding Philadelphia. Of the less than $49,000,000 of post-office revenue from the whole Union

in that year, more than $5,162,000—that is nearly one-ninth of the whole—were collected by Mr. Pearson alone, without the loss of a dollar—collected at a cost of less than $1,900,000 thus giving the government an annual net profit, from the metropolis, of $3,270,986 in the very years when its postmaster was thus refused money needed for carrying on his work; and all this to punish him for being a reformer rather than a partisan.

The manner of doing this vast business was in keeping with its magnitude. In a city where more numerous languages are largely spoken, more travelers are found, more foreigners are to be dealt with, and far greater difficulties from tenement houses exist, than in any other city, there was an accuracy, promptness and courtesy in all the doings of the post-office very rarely attained under the most favorable conditions.

In the large—business parts of the city, and with appropriate frequency elsewhere, there were twenty-six collectors and nine deliveries of mail daily—a degree of efficiency largely beyond that ever reached in New York before Mr. Pearson's time and largely beyond that yet reached in any other place in this country—if in any other place in the world.

Such, in a practical way, were some of the consequences of expelling the spoils system and establishing the merit system at the New York Post-office—of keeping an experienced and faithful man at the head of it—and of preventing patronage mongers and party wire pullers from controlling it.

But a yet more important part of the record must not be forgotten here. Courteous in manner, mild in speech, generous in his judgment, tolerant in spirit, stainless in all private and official relations—Mr. Pearson kept the post-office as orderly as an encampment, as respectable as a ladies' parlor. In a city where all that is most corrupt and disgraceful in American politics and official life have been seen, the post-office, under him, was spurned by the office-begging and vicious classes, but it was visited by every good citizen with pleasure and left by them with admiration.

No charge of favoritism or neglect was ever brought against him.

While its doors to employment were always closed against favoritism and influence—while neither the persuasion of party nor the frown of power could force them—they were always wide open and welcome to every person of either sex, of whatever political or religious faith, who wished to enter a fair and open competition of merit for gaining a place in the public service; and through such opportunities have been brought together a body of post-office officials nowhere else equalled. They have peculiar claims upon the gratitude of the country; and let us hope they will be spared the fate of the leader they honored, and around whose untimely grave near a thousand of them so lately stood in every aspect of mourning.

Mr. Pearson not only showed it to be possible, in one day, to withstand the passion and greed of party, and to have a pure and efficient public service, thus based on merit and justice—facts to which eminent foreigners have referred with commendation—but he elevated a great branch of that service in the esteem of every commercial nation of the world. He illustrated a lofty—an ideal—standard of duty and patriotism in civil office, which has, in some degree, effected for good, and more and more in coming years will inspire, the great body of the civil servants of the nation.—He ennobled all his good work—he crowned his lofty standards—he endeared his official life to all patriotic citizens, not indeed by the intellectual power of Eliot or Vane, of Hampden or Sumner or Garrison, but by a moral and patriotic heroism not less than theirs. It took a courage as great to stand and work without murmuring, at such a post of duty, until his strength was utterly gone, and then to go home and die like a true christian, of the cruel neglect and injustice of his government, as it did to brave any peril by which Shaw or Custer lost their lives; and the young widow of the late postmaster has the same claim, as the widows of those heroes, upon the patriotic womanhood of New York and the whole country. Mr. Mommsen tells us that when the parti-

sans of Rome had murdered the last of the sons of Cornelia, they would not allow her to dress in mourning. When our heroes die the bereaved may not only have the luxury of mourning but are sure of the consolation of seeing tens of thousands mourn with them.

It is not the mere enthusiasm of generous minds, aroused by such devotion and injustice, which presents Mr. Pearson as a martyr. The great party organ before cited, after quoting Dr. Jacobis' declaration that the postmaster "was over-worked and "should take rest," and Mr. Pearson's last words, "I have spent "my life in fighting the spoils system," then goes on and prints, with every apparent form of approval, for the instruction of its readers, these positive and veritable words of the physicians last in charge of Mr. Pearson, explaining the causes of death: "Mr. "Pearson is dying from internal hemorrhages superinduced by "long continued mental and physical strain. He is worn out by "over-work and over-worry and is simply a *martyr* to the public "service."—New York *Tribune*, April 21.

The truth of these words has never been questioned. Such is the well-attested conviction of every one having the best means of information. It will be the stern verdict of history by which his persecutors will be condemned.

Mr. Pearson was of necessity a reformer; for Providence had given him an ideal so high and a sense of responsibility so profound that he could not act a mere selfish or perfunctory part in the world. Whatever was wrong in the affairs of the country stirred him for a remedy, and the utmost he could do to make things better was for him the measure of his duty and his endeavor. He recognized and enforced moral obligations in politics. Practical politics with him involved obedience to the moral law. And he was also, in the true sense, an Independent; for a while he believed in parties and by work, speech and contributions supported the principles of his own party, he did not surrender his convictions to its majority or fawn before its chieftains. He de-

fended and enforced its avowed principles when the party managers were unfaithful to them. He nobly dared expose its faults and condemn its unworthy candidates. Such faith and conduct are at once the example and definition of an Independent in politics. The most ordinary man can follow on blindly and submissively with his party. Instinct and self-interest are enough to impel him. To go with the party is generally the way to office, to profit, and to that kind of social intercourse which most men covet. But, to be a true party man, and yet to be something far above and much more than a mere party man, to be faithful to duty and the public interest when it involves persecution, to rebuke party leaders when they are unfaithful and clamor for patronage, to stand resolutely for sound principles when great officers at Washington abandon them in subservience to the managers of the machine—this requires a rare and brave man like the late postmaster.

This is not the time for considering the party policy illustrated in the sacrifice of Mr. Pearson. But this policy will surely be a great issue of the future which the people will decide. Nevertheless, these questions are pressing upon all thoughtful and candid minds! Why were not the services of this administrator of unequalled ability, fidelity and devotion—desired by the government? Why was this reformer, hero and martyr repelled and scorned by those in power? What did they wish to do, which could not be done when he was at the head of the New York Post-office? What kind of a theory of justice or good administration was that which would hustle out such a public servant for no avowed reasons? Why was a postmaster utterly without experience in postal affairs desired in so great an office where skill in its business is so essential? Why was not some one of Mr. Pearson's worthy subordinates made postmaster as President Garfield promoted Mr. James and Mr. Pearson?

Fortunate the country if a better man than the late postmaster has been found, but inauspicious indeed the change, if, at

this centennial period it has been made on the theory that party patronage is more important or will do more to strengthen a party than good administration or justice to faithful officers. It has not been pretended that the improvement of the postal service was the motive for the change. Such a pretense would be preposterous. Why then the change? Who dares state the reasons for it? It is certain that under Mr. Pearson no schemes for manipulating elections had been matured, no squads of officials for aiding any party had been organized, no money for buying votes had been extorted from salaries or diverted from appropriations, at the New York Post-office. Nor in the future would such things have been possible if he remained postmaster..

It would be unfair to the new postmaster to insinuate that he will favor such things. He is entitled to a fair trial and should not be prejudged. But if those who caused Mr. Pearson to be thrust out and a new man to be put in a position of which he knows nothing, had no such ends in view, why did they desire the change?

We may charge this great act of injustice and ingratitude, that has shocked such unnumbered thousands of the first minds of the nation, to that nefarious spoils system, which is as blind as fate, as secret as the star chamber, as despotic as the feudal system, as unsatiable and pitiless as the inquisition. But the diabolical machinery of the inquisition itself was worked by men in its own spirit, who made money out of its confiscations, found revenge in its cruel deeds, and expected to strengthen their party by the terror it caused. The spoils system is in the same way but an agency for the purposes of those who enforce it and live by it.

Justice to the dead postmaster and to the people of New York, whom he served so well, alike, required that the finger of scorn should be pointed to those in office and out of office who are really responsible for the secret intrigue, injustice and ingratitude by which the country has been disgraced. The President was not well informed as to the facts. He, no less than Congress,

has been deceived and misled. The people will be glad to find such good reasons for excusing him.

But there were men officially near to him, in more than one department of the government,—men in high office from New York—men whose names are now as familiar as they are bitter on the tongues of thousands in connection with this matter, to whom all the facts were well known. Any explanation which excuses the President convicts them. They owed a duty to truth, to the city of New York, to the late postmaster, and to the President himself, to cause the facts to be known—and they are guilty for not performing it in the precise degree and for the very reason that the President must be excused. They had no right to stand by in tame subservience, without one word of manly protest, and see such an officer sacrificed to a band of conspirators secretly confederated with the party machine managers of New York City politics. They may be as successful in discrediting exalted stations as Mr. Pearson has been in making a subordinate position illustrious. But it is certain that no amount of servility to spoils system interests, no dread of the revenge of the scheming politician who rushed out of the United States Senate to marshal for battle the henchmen of a brilliant senator, because that senator could not control President Garfield—no measure of fidelity to pledges made to such a politician or to his associates—will justify these high officials in the desertion—in their connivance at the removal when on his death-bed—of a public officer who had done more than the whole of them to make the public service of his country pure and honorable. The facts are conspicuous, that an officer of the rarest capacity and purity of character—an officer against whom no fault can be alleged—an officer who has rendered his country more valuable services than any other subordinate officer whatever has rendered it within the last decade, an officer, who more than any other embodies the qualities which the removal of grave abuses most demands—such an officer who was pre-eminent in originating and making practical, a high policy which his party

is publicly pledged to support—has, while on his death-bed, been ejected by secret influences and for unavowed reasons, from that service, in which, every consideration of gratitude, justice and the public interest, required he should be retained and promoted. He has been repelled, let it be repeated, for reasons which no man or journal has had the hardihood to state publicly. His overthrow is apparently a victory for an unscrupulous and cowardly body of conspirators and machine managers. They, with some good citizens whom they have forced or cajoled into aiding them—backed doubtless by others who are blind and partisan enough to think that no one but a partisan of their own fold is fit to be a postmaster—are the only persons pleased with the result, unless it be sagacious members of the other party who see the effective use they can make in the next elections of such acts of folly and madness.

It has been plausibly suggested that the fact of Mr. Pearson's serious illness resulting in death proves the need and justice of removing him by nominating a successor. For the gratitude and justice of the country, every patriotic American would be glad if he could accept such a view. But the least reflection upon it condemns it as utterly false and repulsive. The removal was resolved upon months ago in the secret councils of the conspiracy and machine. It was bad enough to break down Mr. Pearson by persecution. He might have been allowed to die without the pang of removal. To use the time of his disability for hurrying him out of office was enough to make even a very curable sickness fatal. The appointment of his successor was his removal in fact and in law. That there was no need for making it in such cruel haste is plain from the facts that to this day,—many days after Mr. Pearson was laid in his grave—the new postmaster is still absorbed in the duties of another office,—a hundred and fifty miles away—while a person selected by the bondsmen of the late postmaster is Acting-Postmaster at New York. The pretense that his removal, when made was needful, is an audacious insult to the public intel-

ligence. The conspirators and machine managers who have triumphed had no more regard for the condition of Mr. Pearson than they had for the public interests and the ordinary instincts of humanity and decency. They feared their man would not get the place if not rushed in at once.

No just government makes haste to sever the official relations of its captains bleeding to death on its war vessels—or of its Generals or Colonels dying in the trenches. To do so would call forth a cry of indignation and horror.

When Generals Grant and Sheridan were lingering on their beds of death, and no party patronage was involved—no machine managers had selfish ends to serve—laws were hurried through Congress, with universal approval, for raising their rank and their salaries. It is only when the passions and patronage of parties are involved that reputable men become so blind to ordinary justice and propriety as to see without indignation the removal of the noblest servants of the people—pressed with indecent haste and disgraceful inhumanity, lest a public opinion shall be aroused which may make such removal impossible.

These conspirators had good reason to fear that if Mr. Pearson should linger for weeks on the border of life their scheme for putting a party man in place might fail. The people had not imagined he was to be removed, but were beginning to comprehend the situation.

There is another aspect of our subject, reaching far beyond its relations to the deceased postmaster, which must not be overlooked. It is not the worst of the matter that the most meritorious of public servants has been expelled when every rational view of the public interests—even of party interests—would have retained and honored him. It is not the worst that high officers have stood aloof in selfish indifference or disgraceful fear, when they ought to have spoken words of justice and wisdom for one nobler though lower in official grade than themselves. It is not the worst, even, that this has been done at a time and under cir-

cumstances which seem to impeach the humanity and gratitude of the nation. It is worse than all this that the persecution and expulsion of Mr. Pearson say to young men seeking public positions — to all the boys and girls in our schools — "your way "to office is not through superior intelligence and character but "through subservience to party and party leaders who are the "superior powers of the nation," — and further say to all men in office, "if you would be fairly treated by your superiors, if you "would avoid persecution, if you would be continued in your "places, the things for you to do are not to be the most economi- "cal, upright and efficient officers in the country, but to make "your offices profitable to the party in power and yourself accep- "table to those great politicians who control it. Indulge in no "hope of being vindicated or protected by Senators or Vice-Pres- "idents when party demands your places." A wise government would have erected a monument to the late postmaster in the place of duty where he fell, proclaiming to all the people its gratitude for such devotion.

It is hardly less unfortunate that all this has been brought about in such apparent obedience to the secret machinations of selfish and scheming politicians as to cause vast numbers of the best citizens to fear — however needless — that the President himself has been overpowered and that the solemn and specific pledges under which he gained office have been deliberately violated. It is little less unfortunate, also, that the highest intelligence and public virtue of the country have been shocked, and that faith of vast numbers of such citizens in the early triumph of purity and sound principles in public administration has been impaired. They look in vain for any good reasons that can justify such acts and feel their dishonor all the more, because it obtrudes itself at the very moment when we are celebrating the virtues and commending the public life of Washington, to which such acts are utterly repugnant. No one can conceive of President Washington removing such a Postmaster, by appointing

a successor, under such circumstances — unless indeed he was utterly deceived, as President Harrison, seems to have been. No one can point to any good which has come or can come to the government or the people — or even to the party in power — from such an act, while it is plain, to all candid minds, that the confidence and respect of tens of thousands has been lost. The government would now be far stronger if Mr. Pearson was Postmaster at New York or had been allowed to die in office.

The strength of the public sentiment, which protests against such injustice and folly, but, which a blind, fierce party spirit cannot comprehend — has just found a striking illustration before that distinguished centennial audience, in the church where Washington worshipped, in these timely and noble words of Bishop Potter.

"The conception of the National Government as a huge machine, existing mainly for the purpose of rewarding partisan service — this was a conception so alien to the character and conduct of Washington and his associates that it seems grotesque even to speak of it. It would be interesting to imagine the first President of the United States confronted with some one who had ventured to approach him upon the basis of what are now commonly known as practical politics."

It is difficult to say which is the more lamentable, the insensibility which cannot feel the power and appropriateness of these words, the party servility which deprecates them, or the cowardice which would shrink from uttering them. Nothing said on that great occasion has so touched the popular heart as these words and those with which they were connected, and nothing else will be so long or gratefully remembered by the people.

No candid man can first read this language from Washington's farewell address: "there being constant danger of an excess "of party spirit," the effort ought to be made "by force of public "opinion to mitigate and assuage it," and then consider this handing over of the New York Post-office to a party man in obe-

dience to the express claims made by the machine managers, that by so doing the power and spirit of party will be increased — no thoughtful person can compare these broadly-contrasted theories— without a profound and painful sense of the vast distance we have drifted, in public administration, from the principles and practice of the first President; nor can much relief be found in the fact that so great a part of the centennial speeches, with apparent studiousness or blindness, kept clear of this subject — of the growth of despotism in the management of parties and of servility in their ranks — though no subject upon which the orators dwelt was of anything like so grave importance. Nevertheless there is not the least occasion for despair, but rather for confidence and aggressive effort. The blood of martyrs has often been the seed of the church. The recoil against the sacrifice of the first civil servant who gave his life for his country will be great and salutary. Civil Service Reform is sure to have great triumphs in the near future. Mr. Bryce, in his American Commonwealth, tells us that there is no country in which public opinion as distinguished from party opinion—is so powerful as in the United States; and he refers to the support of Civil Service Reform by public opinion as the most striking evidence of the fact, and as one of the highest assurances of the stability of the nation.

Henry George Pearson will very soon have a biographer. A patriotic and grateful people will not soon forget an official life so heroic and useful, a fate so unjust and deplorable. It is beyond the power of the combined partisans of the country to suppress the lesson which such a life teaches or the indignation which such an expulsion and death have caused. There are vast numbers who would read his biography with gratitude toward the brave young officer and abhorrence toward those politicians and conspirators who persecuted him and hurried him from his office to his grave. There are many party men in New York, who, thoughtlessly signed petitions in aid of the scheming leaders of their party, who will yet be ashamed of the part they have acted in this tragedy.

No better work than a fit life of Mr. Pearson could be placed in the hands of our young men. If his monument shall not be raised at once, it will rise not long hence, and a vast number of young men who are proud of his career will help to raise it.

He will speak as powerfully from his untimely grave, for the great cause to which his life was given, as he ever spoke for it while living. He will teach his country a salutary lesson by his example long after every official act of those who have driven him from office will be forgotten.

The great poet of liberty and justice, whose continental poem was read yesterday at St. Paul's Chapel, has left these other lines not unfit to be here recalled, not inappropriate, perhaps, to be carved on that monument:

O pure reformer! not in vain
Your trust in human kind.

* * * *

The truths ye urge are borne abroad,
By every wind and tide;
The voice of nature and of God
Speak out upon your side.

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